

The God Who Won't Give Up

Not everyone in Jesus' world gave him a warm welcome. Not everyone received him with grace. And many didn't just ignore him, they rejected him.

Isaiah prophesied his reception like this: "He was despised and rejected by men" (Isa. 53:3 NIV).

John summarized the rejection of Jesus with these words: "He was in the world, and though the world was made through him, the world did not recognize him. He came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him" (John 1:10-11 NIV).

How did Christ endure treatment like that? At any point he could have said, "I quit. I've had enough." Why didn't he? What kept him from giving up?

I wonder if LeeElpi understands the answer? He is a retired firefighter, a New York City firefighter. He gave twenty-six years to the city. But on September 11, 2001, he gave much more. He gave his son. Jonathan Ielpi was a fireman as well. When the Twin Towers fell, he was there.

Firefighters are a loyal clan. When one perishes in the line of duty, the body is left where it is until a firefighter who knows the person can come and quite literally pick it up. Lee made the discovery of his son's body his personal mission. He dug daily with dozens of others at the sixteen-acre graveyard. One Tuesday, December 11, three months after the disaster, his son was found. And Lee was there to carry him out.

He didn't give up. The father didn't quit. He refused to turn and leave. Why? Because his love for his son was greater than the pain of the search. Can't the same be said about Christ? Why didn't he quit? Because the love for his children was greater than the pain of the journey. He came to pull you out. Your world had collapsed. That's why he came. You were dead, dead to sin. That's why he came. He loves you. That's why he came.

That's why he endured the distance between us. "Love...endures *all things*."

That's why he endured the resistance from us. "Love...endures *all things*."

That's why he went the final step of the incarnation: "God made him who had not sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God" (2 Cor. 5:21 NIV).

Why did Jesus do that? There is only one answer. And that answer has one word. Love. And that love of Christ "bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things" (1 Cor. 13:7 NKJV).

Think about that for a moment. Drink from that for a moment. Drink deeply. Don't just sip or nip. It's time to gulp. It's time to let his love cover all things in your life. All secrets. All hurts. All hours of evil, minutes of worry.

The mornings you awoke in the bed of a stranger? His love will cover that. The years you peddled prejudice and pride? His love will cover that. Every promise broken, drug taken, penny stolen. Every cross word, cuss word, and harsh word. His love covers all things.

Let it. Discover along with the psalmist. “He...loads me with love and mercy” (Ps. 103:4). Picture a giant dump truck full of love. There you are behind it. God lifts the bed until the love starts to slide. Slowly at first, then down, down, down until you are hidden, buried, covered in his love.

“Hey, where are you?” someone asks.

“In here, covered in love.”

Let his love cover all things.

Do it for his sake. To the glory of his name.

Do it for your sake. For the peace of your heart.

And do it for their sake. For the people in your life. Let his love fall on you so yours can fall on them.